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ABSTRACT

Homework is often controversial, especially in the lower grades. This paper begins by surveying research pertaining to homework in elementary school and identifying the goals and objectives of the homework process. The discussion of the literature covers: (1) views on homework through the 20th century; (2) a need for homework policies; (3) advantages of homework; (4) disadvantages of homework; (5) effects of homework at each grade level; (6) comparison of the United States to other countries; and (7) making homework work. The paper next presents ideas for teachers, parents, and students regarding homework, including a recommended homework policy, a parents' checklist for monitoring study, and sample letter to parents about homework. The paper then describes a survey about homework habits administered to 40 parents and 60 students in second grade. Findings indicated that 83 percent of parents like very much that their children get homework, and 78 percent of students also enjoy homework. Students indicated a belief that by doing homework, they will become smarter. (Contains 26 references.) (EV)

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"Did you complete all your homework tonight, dear?"

Catherine O'Rourke-Ferrara

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Homework is an issue that is constantly in question, especially in the lower grades. The purpose of this article was to survey research pertaining to homework in the elementary school and identify the goals and objectives of the homework process. Data revealed that, after grade 4, the amount of homework done, does have an effect on academic achievement. A survey about homework habits was administered to 40 parents and 60 students from grade 2. The results indicated that, 83% of parents like very much that their children get homework and 78% of the students like doing homework,too. Other similarities existed in the responses for questions asked of both parents and students, too. The students indicated that by doing homework, they will be smarter.

Ever since I started teaching, I find that some children constantly are not doing their homework. There are many different reasons why the child was not able to complete it. Sometimes a parent will send a note explaining why the child did not do the work but, most times it is only the child's explaination that I hear. I also see a lack of parent involvement when it comes to doing the homework. I request that all homework should be signed as well as the assignment. With children that are having real difficulty, I try to get the parent in and explain the best way to help their child complete all the assignments given. Sometimes the problem is corrected but, many times the parents cooperate for just a few days or weeks and then the child is back to not doing homework. Although my son is in the 5th grade and my daughter in 3rd, I still check my children's homework assignments and sign them all. It makes me wonder, is homework necessary at the elementary school level, and how much is appropriate, and what kinds of homework lead to academic achievement. What do parents and students expect from a homework assignment?. These are all questions I set out to answer as I read through the many research articles out there about, homework. What is homework? According to the American Heritage dictionary (1992), the definition of homework is; work, such as schoolwork or piecework, that is done at home; preperatory or preliminary work.

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Views on Homework through the 20th Century

Over the years the debate as to whether homework is necessary or not, is still an issue that can be argued. Everyone has their own opinions, each contributing very valid points as to why homework should/should not be done. Researchers keep investigating what is best for the child when it comes to homework, and what effects it has on each grade level. There are many pros and cons as to whether or not homework is necessary at the elementary school level but, in the upper grades homework is definitely a must.

During the earliest part of the century homework was opposed. From the time between 1910 to the 1920's, homework was opposed because, it was believed to be unwholesome, professionaly unsupervised, allowed for children to practice too many mistakes, too much drill practice type homework was being given, and children had to carry their books home (Paschal, Weinstein, Walberg, 1984). Since means of transportation were poor and schools far from homes, this was a burden on the child.

During the 1930's, homework was accepted. It was seen as a tool for memorization and the mind could be stimulated from mental exercises. Memorization was something that could be done at home, homework was now a key part of schooling (Cooper,1989).

During the next decade, homework was once again being opposed. It was being used as punishment, assignments were taking longer, and whether or not it helped to improve memorization skills was beginning to be questioned. The amount of homework being given lightened due to it interfering with afterschool activities and other private matters (Cooper, Lindsay, Greathouse, Nye,1998).

By the 1950's, with the launching of Sputnik by the Russians, America realized its students were not being prepared for the complex technological future and education lacked rigor. Technology was now in the forefront and America needed to catch up. Homework was now seen as a way of enhancing the amount of knowledge acquisition (Cooper,1989).

By the 1960's homework became a big issue again but, studies done were mostly based on opinions. The homework pressures on children were leaving them too stressed out. This was viewed as being detrimental to their health. This was also the time of the Vietnam war when people were concerned with peace and love, the exposure to drugs

was effecting our children. Most approaches to homework were being questioned and a need for re-evaluation was evident (Cooper et al., 1998).

Over the next decade the emphasis on homework declined and, once again, America would be in for a rude awakening. The 1980's was a time of drastic changes in education, American schools were failing according to the U.S. Department of Education which presented the report, *A Nation at Risk* as well as other national reports. They found our students in comparison to other nations, less qualified academically (National Commission on Excellence in Education,1983). Their findings lead to American schools reform, and an increase in the amount of homework being given. In comparison to other nations, American students spent less time on their academic work inside, as well as outside of school and, they did not use the time effectively. According to the report, high school students were spending less than one hour per night on doing homework. Schools were not helping students develop good study skills or how to use their time wisely. The report recommended that, "students in high schools should be assigned far more homework than is now the case,"(Turvey,1986).

Once again, the views on homework changed towards a positive approach and America's schools were being reformed. It was recommended that more time be devoted to learning the basics, use of the school day should be more effective, a longer school day, or a lenghtened school year should be considered, too. Overall, studies have shown that homework does increase academic achievement.

A Need for Policies

For homework to be successful we need to examine what homework policies, if any, exists within the school districts. There are some school districts without a policy, and even those that have policies but, are not always followed. We need to examine if local school districts have a formal policy; if the existing policies include modifications for students with disabilities; the attributes found within each districts policy(i.e., frequency, amount, types of homework, and types of feedback); and the methods used for communicating homework policies to teachers and parents (Roderique, Polloway, Cumblad, Epstein, Bursuck, 1994).

From the research done by Roderique, Polloway, Cumblad, Epstein, and Bursuck (1994) in reference to the preceding items, they found that most school districts do not have a formal policy, more than half allow for modifications for students with disabilities, and almost all districts informed parents about policies and/or regulations. Teachers were informed of policies by either distribution of district-wide or school handbooks, or by faculty conferences.

Groups of parents, students, teachers, and administrators, should all be involved in the successful planning of a district homework policy (Foyle,1986). Once established, a homework policy should be reviewed periodically and necessary revisions made as changes in curriculum occur (Roderique et al., 1994). The policy should reflect the purposes for all involved, teachers need a policy to guide them with assignments, children need to know what to expect, and parents have the right to know why and for what reason each assignment is given (Savage,1969). Students in the middle schools sometimes get too much homework, and on other nights may not have any. The teachers across the grade level need to get together for weekly planning so that, students are not overwhelmed with the amount of homework required on a daily basis. There needs to be an open communication across the grade levels as to what type of homework is being given.

When a homework policy does not exist in the elementary grades, studies have showed that there are adverse affects on academic performance once these students are in high school. In the El Segundo study, homework was abolished in grades 5 through 8. By the time these students went through high school there was a significant drop in their high school marks in comparison to the students that did assigned homework in grades 5 through 8 (Goldstein, 1960). A good foundation for the expectations of homework needs to be laid out in the beginning of a child's school career in order for them to enhance their academic success through high school.

We need to develop homework policies, practices, and tasks that will fit the needs of school learning, features of home environments and family life, and individual differences (McDermott, Goldman, Varenne, 1984). Homework is an issue that may help bridge the gap between regular education and special education students. Policies should address the unique needs of students with learning disabilities because, they are often

included in general education classes(Roderique et al., 1994). As school policies continue to dictate increases in homework, the expectations of all children whether in general or special education, will probably increase(Bryan, Nelson, 1994).

Conducting a homework survey would be beneficial in helping to determine the teacher's, parent's, and student's opinions of homework(Foyle, 1986). Once conducted, the data should be analyzed by the homework committee in order to develop a homework policy that can meet the needs of all students involved(Foyle, 1986).

According to Harris Cooper (1989), who is considered to be the homework expert (Tabor, 1996), states that, districts need to clearly indicate their rationale as to why homework is given, why it is sometimes mandatory, and state the general time requirements. Schools need to notify parents of time requirements, coordinate assignments between all classes, and lay out the role of teachers and administrators. Then, the teachers can establish a classroom policy to inform the students as to what is expected of them and why (Cooper, 1989).

Advantages of Homework

Homework has been proven too boost academic achievement. Very early on in a child's school career, homework helps to develop good study techniques and attitudes about school (Goldstein, 1960; Cooper et al., 1998). Independent study skills and working independently is a goal that homework can accomplish. Study techniques develop at a young age, and even if these children are prepared for what lies ahead, they will not be successful if we do not continue to build upon the amount of homework required of them, from grade to grade. In the El Segundo study, Goldstein (1960) helps to support this idea. The right amount of homework on each grade level is advantageous for increasing academic success and can be rewarding and fun.

Students feel, that homework helps them learn new material and better their grades (Featherstone, 1985). Homework can provide challenges for the faster child as well as lend support to the slower child. All research showed that when homework was graded and commented upon, it lead to higher achievement, good attitudes and was shown to raise the overall learning average (Turvey, 1986). This can raise learning from the 50th to the 79th percentile (Walberg, Paschal, Weinstein, 1985).

When homework was individualized, options given, and it was meaningful to the classwork being covered, it was done willingly and the students were more successful (Black, 1997; Featherstone, 1985). Homework needs to be meaningful and compliment classroom learning. This can help reinforce, practice, and apply the strategies learned in school. Homework enhances and enriches the learning process. Parents feel that homework helps build character, develops children's initiative and responsibility (Featherstone, 1985).

Homework helps a parent get involved with their child's education. Parents can aquaint themselves with what the child is learning in school. When parents are involved, students can raise their academic achievement. Parents who stimulate their child's learning can raise achievement from the 50th to the 84th percentile (Paschal et al., 1984). A child can make great academic strides if, the learning process continues at home and the help is effective. There is a need for strong communication between parents and teachers in order for the child to be successful in all school related areas (Jayanthi, Bursuck, Epstein, Polloway, 1997). Homework can help create a closer bond between the home and school.

Disadvantages of Homework

Homework is a big part of all American families but, all of America's families are not alike. The family background a child comes from can be very harmful to their school performance. A lack of communication may exist between the parent and teacher on the students performance. Fault may lie with either or. The home environment may interfere with homework completion (McDermott et al., 1984). Parents may lack the knowledge necessary to help their child or, just may not have the time too help them (Jayanthi et al., 1997).

Busywork, such as copying information or worksheets, has little value. When teachers put up the assignments at the end of the day and students rush to copy it, this can lead to errors in copying (Black, 1997). When the student gets home they will not be able to do the correct assignment due to the errors when copying it. If a child is not able to comminicate with a classmate about an assignment, they will return to school with it incorrectly done or, not done at all. Sometimes a student is given an assignment which the teacher feels should take about 25 minutes but, in reality it took more than an hour to

complete. Teachers do not have an accurate time frame as to how long an assignment may take. The faster child may complete it within the time allotted but, the slower child can not.

Too much homework is interfering with free time (Tabor, 1996). Students may be involved in extra-curricular activities that interfere with homework completion (Cooper, 1989). Today, many children are involved in afterschool activities and often times they do not complete all their homework assignments because of such involvements. This can lead to giving up the activity they are involved with, thus causing anger and frustration. Watching television, or talking on the phone while doing homework leads to poorly done homework (Cooper, 1989; Nathan, 1996). By the time a child finishes 12 years of school the average time spent on academic learning amounts to 6.2 years and television watching to 15.8 years (Paschal et al., 1984).

Homework should never be used as a punishment. Too many teachers are still assigning useless, even counterproductive homework, work that duplicates without reinforcing material covered in class (Begley, 1998). Students in the upper grades are overloaded with homework from 5 to 6 major subjects in one night and hardly any the next. Drill sheets are sometimes given which, often leads students to practice mistakes.

Effects of Homework on Each Grade Level

In th early grades, homework can become a parent's nightmare. By 2nd grade, parents begin to dread the nights. Too much homework in the early grades, especially 2nd, can interfere with family life and student performance (Cooper et al., 1998). Bad homework might explain the lack of connection between homework and student achievement in the elementary grades (Begley, 1998). If overwhelmed by the homework it can lead to school fail. Many parents feel the children are getting too much homework. Children are being turned off to learning and feeling stressed out.

At the elementary level, math homework seemed to be at the top of the list for work that parents had the most difficulty with, in helping their child. It was recommended that even at the 9th grade level, no math books should be taken home and questions on math should only be answered by the teachers (Featherstone, 1985). Many educators over the years have been opposed to homework because, of the diverse family backgrounds

that children come from. They feel if a child comes from a home where the parents may be uneducated, to busy, or simply can not give their child the necessary help needed, then the child becomes frustrated and this can lead to failure.

If a child is learning disabled, or has behavioral problems, the stress is even greater (Epstein, Polloway, Foley, Patton, 1993). Teachers of special and general education need to communicate the needs necessary for the success of children with special needs (Cooper et al., 1998). Even children with special needs will achieve higher grades by doing more homework.

Harris Cooper (1989), an expert on homework, feels that before grade four, homework is not necessary for academic achievement. The results of a new study done by Cooper et al., (1998) suggests, that while the effects may not be immediately evident, eventually the homework done in the early grades will impact upon academic achievement. Evidence showed, that as early as the 2nd grade, the frequency of completed homework assignments predicted the grades. In the elementary grades, the assignments given are an indication of what the child has learned in school. Parents can see if what they learned, can be completed on their own or if there is difficulty. The later would suggest a need for review.

At the elementary level, all research done shows, that homework has no conclusive effects on learning. However, at the high school level, homework leads to a higher level of academic achievement. This foundation starts out small and gets built upon little by little. In junior high school, homework raises student achievement about half as much from high school (Cooper et al., 1998; Black, 1997). Although, homework done may not show conclusive evidence on learning at the elementary level, a good foundation is needed for the overall academic success of our nations students.

Comparison of U.S. Standards to Other Countries

At the time the of our schools reform in 1983, which was due to the report done by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, international comparisons of student achievement, revealed that, on 19 academic tests American students were never first or second and, in comparison with other industrialized nations, we were last seven times. American students compared to other nations, spend much less time on school

work; and time spent in the classroom and on homework is often used ineffectively. Schools were not doing enough to help students develop either the study skills required to use time well or the willingness to spend more time on school work. Standards are too low in America.

In England and other industrialized countries, it is not unusual for high school students to spend 8 hours a day at school, for 220 days per year. Studies show that Japanese students high school degree is almost equivalent to our bachelors degree. U.S. students score lower because they spend less time studying inside and outside of school. Japanese students spend about 52 hours per week on learning in comparison to Americans that spend only about 34 hours per week on learning. Japanese students engage themselves in an additional 40 hours of tutoring and study per week, besides their regular school on Saturday, and they only have brief summer vacations (Walberg et al., 1985). Even the education at superior high schools in America can not compare to a Japanese education.

In Scotland, study centers have been set up to help improve the connection between home and school. The home/school connection is critically important to a child's success in school. Similar to American schools, studies showed that homework was a major trouble spot. A two year study of homework was commissioned in 1989 to find ways of improving the homework problems in Scotland.

They pinpointed many of the problems and came up with the idea of study centers. These centers were set up for young people to go and do homework, or study. Schools would keep their libraries and resource centers open until the evening. Classrooms were set up as study support centers staffed with teachers, parents or volunteer tutors from the community. Some schools even ran residential weekends, weeks or summer schools. Other schools were encouraged to have their senior students help supervise or mentor the younger students. So far it has been successful but, the research is still in progress and the final results will not be concluded until two more years. The goal of these centers is to help students get their homework accomplished and build the bond between the home and school (MacBeath, 1998).

A Need for Homework and Making it Work

Homework is necessary for the future of America's schools and to make this possible, parents, teachers, students, and administrators, all need to work together for the success of our future generations (Polloway et al., 1994). Increased homework time is a partial answer to the decline in performance of America's schools. Homework does make a difference in student achievement when that homework is effectively assigned (Turvey, 1986). Sometimes it is necessary to individualize assignments (Black, 1997).

For young children, give assignments that can be completed quickly. All elementary grade levels, including kindergarten, should have a minimum of four days of homework per week (Tabor, 1996). Assign homework that gives the student an opportunity to engage in creative and exploratory activities. Homework should relate to classwork. Homework that gives explicit lessons on how to study is very beneficial for young children (Cooper et al., 1998). In order to be successful in high school, a good foundation of attitudes and apptitude towards homework needs to be laid out in the early years.

Although homework may be more important in some grades than in others, there needs to be regularity and continuity with homework throughout a child's school career right from the very beginning (Goldstein, 1960). Being consistent will help lead to excellence in homework. Homework can help develop life long skills such as time management and organizational strategies. Teachers and parents can be the key helpers in accomplishing these skills.

Parents, students, teachers, and policymakers need to know what is really going on with homework, what works and what doesn't work. Homework can help build personal responsibility if parents help to support this goal through structure and supervision of homework. Communication about problems should be done early on in the year and not wait until regular conferences (Corno, 1996). We need to work as a team in order for homework to be successful.

Helpful Ideas for Teachers, Parents, and Students

I have included in my research a suggested homework policy by Harris Cooper (1989) in Figure 1. A homework policy is the first step necessary for implementing the completion of homework. The teachers and parents should be aware of the homework policy that exist within each school. These ideas and suggestions can be compared to the policy your school may have. Then you can decide whether or not your schools policy is lacking in any areas. In Figure 2, is a parent's checklist for helping their child to develop good study techniques (Clary, 1986). This checklist can be used by the parent to help their child before they begin to study for a major assignment. When the child is given guidance, eventually they will be able to study independently by asking themselves these same questions.

I have also included a letter which can be reproduced and distributed to parents in order to help get their child on the right path for successfully completing their homework. This information was taken from *Helping Your Child with Homework* (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1996). A copy of this letter should be distributed at the beginning of a new school year and parents should be reminded to refer to it when their child comes home to do homework. With all these techniques put to good use, each child has a chance to achieve academic success. The teachers, parents, students, and the administration all must work together to meet all the educational needs.

Fig.1 A Recommended Homework Policy [1]

For Districts

Homework is a cost-effective instructional technique. It can have positive effects on achievement and character development and can serve as a vital link between the school and family.

Homework should have different purposes at different grades. For younger Students, it should foster positive attitudes, habits, and character traits. For older students, it should facilitate knowledge acquisition in specific topics.

Homework should be required at all grade levels, but a mixture of mandatory and voluntary homework is most beneficial.

The frequency and duration of mandatory assignments should be:

1. Grades 1 to 3-one to three assignments a week, each lasting no more than 15 minutes
2. Grades 4 to 6-two to four assignments a week, each lasting 15 to 45 minutes
3. Grades 7 to 9-three to five assignments a week, each lasting 45 to 75 minutes
4. Grades 10 to 12-four to five assignments a week, each lasting 75 to 120 minutes

For Schools

The frequency and duration of homework assignments should be further specified to reflect local school and community circumstances.

In schools where different subjects are taught by different teachers, teachers should know:

1. What days of the week are available to them for assignments
2. How much daily homework time should be spent on their subject

Administrators should:

1. Communicate the district and school homework policies to parents
2. Monitor the implementation of the policy
3. Coordinate the scheduling of homework among different subjects, if needed

Teachers should state clearly:

1. How the assignment is related to the topic under study
2. The purpose of the assignment
3. How the assignment might best be carried out
4. What the student needs to do to demonstrate that the assignment has been completed

For Teachers

All students in a class will be responsible for the same assignments, with only rare exceptions.

Homework will include mandatory assignments. Failure to turn in mandatory assignments will necessitate remedial activities.

Homework will also include voluntary assignments meant to meet the needs of individual students or groups of students.

All homework assignments will *not* be formally evaluated. They will be used to locate problems in student progress and to individualize instruction.

Topics will appear in assignments before and after they are covered in class, not just on the day they are discussed.

Homework will not be used to teach complex skills. It will generally focus on simple skills and material or on the integration of skills already possessed by the student.

Parents will rarely be asked to play a formal instructional role in homework. Instead, they should be asked to create a home environment that facilitates student self-study.

[1] From "Synthesis of Research on Homework," by H. Cooper, 1989, *Educational Leadership*, 47(3), p.90. Copyright 1989 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

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Fig.2 Parents' Checklist for Monitoring Study [2]

Before Study

1. Have I helped my child organize the necessary time, space, and materials for study?
2. Do I know exactly what the assignment involves? Have I called the teacher if I am unsure about anything?
3. Have I looked over the assignment so that I can help my child preview it?
4. Do I need to ask the teacher to give me more background on the subject?
5. Have I checked the vocabulary for words that I think my child may not know? (List with page numbers.) _____
   _____
   _____
6. Have I written some questions to suggest as purposes for my child as he reads?_____
   _____
   _____
7. Have I checked with the teacher on the kinds of organization she expects my child to do? (Check the appropriate types.)
   _____underline
   _____list
   _____take notes
   _____outline
   _____retell
   _____write a summary
   _____write a practice exam question (comparison/contrast, draw conclusions, explain, list, draw a diagram, explain procedures, etc.)
8. Have I suggested that when he doesn't understand, my child should (choose one or more)
   _____reread
   _____jump ahead
   _____use an outside reference (glossary, dictionary, map, etc)
   _____ask me
   _____ask someone else
   _____write down questions to ask the teacher

After Study

1. Have I gone over the questions with my child?
2. Have I helped my child list any questions that he needs to ask the teacher?
3. Have I helped my child practice organizing the material in an appropriate way? (See # 7 above)
4. Have I helped my child rehearse this information for use in an appropriate way? (Check One.)
   _____reading the next assignment
   _____solving problems
   _____doing laboratory assignments
   _____writing a paper
   _____taking a test

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[2] From "Help for the Homework Hassle," by L.M. Clary, 1986, *Academic Therapy*, 22(1), p.58-59. Copyright 1986 by Academic Therapy.

LET'S DO HOMEWORK!

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Are you involved with helping your child to do their homework on a daily basis? If you are, then your child is off to a good start. Homework helps to reinforce what the teacher has taught and can help parents be involved in their child's education. When parents show an interest in their child's schoolwork, they teach an important lesson---that learning is fun and worth the effort.

Children who do more homework, on average, do better in school. Homework can also help children learn good habits and attitudes. It can teach children to work by themselves and encourage discipline and responsibility. You must show your child that you think education and homework are important. Parent's, please check your child's work and provide the necessary guidance that they need. Teacher's need you to help your child and your child needs you!

Let's begin the daily homework routine!

Here is a list of helpful hints to help your child prepare for doing homework. If you follow these instructions your child will be on the road to success.

Prepare:

- A quiet place to work with good light.
- A regular time each day for doing homework.
- Basic supplies: paper, pencil, pen, markers, crayons, ruler, scissors and glue.
- Supplies for good organization: assignment calender, book bag, and folders.
- A snack before getting started.

Questions to Ask:

- What's your assignment for today?
- Is the assignment clear? If not, can you call the homework hotline or another student?
- When is it due?
- Do you need special resources (e.g. a trip to the library for required books)?
- Do you need special supplies (e.g. oaktag , posterboard)?
- Have you started today's assignment? Finished it?
- For a major project, would it help to write out the steps or make a schedule?
- Would a practice test be useful? Would you like me to quiz you?
- Is all the homework signed and everything back in the bookbag? Is all your supplies ready for tomorrow, does anything need to be replaced?

More Helpful Hints:

- Meet the teacher early in the year and find out about the homework policy.

- Look over your child's homework, but don't do the work!
- Review teacher comments on homework that has been returned and discuss with your child.
- Check your child's bookbag and folders for notices, forms, test papers and return notes promptly.
- Don't forget to praise your child if they did a great job, let them know how proud you are.

Here's what to do when your child doesn't do their best work:

1. You must stick to a strict homework time. All other activities must stop, your child must get to work right away.

2. If you are not pleased with their performance let them know that you feel they can do better. Suggest they take their time and not rush. Sloppy work with a lot of mistakes is not acceptable.

3. Continue to praise the child. Praising your child for good work is the best way to encourage continued best efforts.

4. A mandatory homework time is a must!

5. Work towards an incentive. Each time your child completes all their homework and you have checked it, put a check on the calender. By the end of the week if they have earned five checks, reward your child by doing something special (e.g. read a good book to them, make cookies together, take a nice walk, go to the park, it should not cost you money).

6. If after trying all these steps your child still does not do his/her best work, contact the teacher. You and the teacher must work together to improve your child's performance.

I hope all of these suggestions have been helpful to you and your child. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the teacher anytime.[3]

[3] U.S. Department of Education, (1996)p.1-5. This information was taken from, *Let's Do Homework*, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED400 122).

A Homework Survey

A homework survey was sent home to parents with a cover letter attached explaining the purpose of the survey and who it was from. The survey was given to three, 2nd grade classes, my own class and the two top classes. Our school tries to group the children homogeneously, however, there are children within each class working at various different levels. The parents were given several days to complete it. The survey consisted of 23 questions on how parents perceive their child's homework habits with responses always, sometimes, never, and several open-ended statements as well. The survey would be strictly confidential, and 2 questions were included asking parents if they would like literature on how to help their child with homework, and if they would like to attend a workshop on homework. Each participant was thanked in advance for completing the survey, and for helping me out with my research.

The students from these three classes were given a survey consisting of 25 questions about their homework habits with responses always, sometimes, never, and 5 open-ended questions relating to their homework habits. The survey was completed in class during one period. The teachers were asked to explain the survey and then to read each question to the students. The children were given ample time to answer each question. The open ended questions were to be completed based on their own feelings. The children were thanked for completing the survey and for working cooperatively with the teacher.

Results

There were a total of 40 parents and 60 students who completed the survey. Most of the parents completed the open-ended questions. The students, however, had some

difficulty completing the open-ended questions due to their writing skills not yet being fully developed. On both surveys some of the questions were similar yet, some of the student's responses differed from the parents and some of the results conveyed similarities. Responses to the most interesting questions follows.

Questions that were similar for parents and students

Of the total number of parents surveyed (N=40) and students surveyed (N=60), 63% of parents responded that their child sometimes fails to bring home all their books and materials necessary for homework. While 50% of the students responded that they always bring home the necessary books needed for homework. 78% of parents responded that their child always copies down all the assignments and that 90% of the students responded always to the same question. 75% of the parents responded that their child always has a set time for completing homework and only 48% of the students responded always, too. 68% of the parents responded that sometimes their child takes an unusually long time to complete homework and 67% of the students responded the same. 80% of the parents responded that the television is never on while their child does homework and 85% of the students responded never as well. 58% of parents responded that their child always completes all homework assigned and 63% of the students responded always, too. 70% of the parents felt that the homework given is always related to what the child learned in class and 85% of the students agreed. When asked if they felt the teacher assigned too much homework, 73% of the parents responded never and only 50% of the students felt they never get too much. When asked if the child is given help when studying

for a test, 68% of the parents responded always and only 48% of the students always received help.

Questions that were only asked of parents

Of the total number of parents surveyed (N=40), 70% of the parents responded that their child sometimes has difficulty concentrating on their homework. 42% of the parents responded that the child rushes through the assignment. 63% of parents responded that they always sign their child's homework. 42% of the parents responded that their child sometimes reponds poorly when asked to correct their homework. 55% of the parents responded that their child keeps a well organized notebook.

Parents indicated their childs biggest homework problems were varied. Some of the responses were that the child makes careless mistakes, rushes to get it done, has a poor attention span, does not work neatly, does not understand the assignment, forgets books in school, needs to work more independently, is easily frustrated by the assignment and has difficulty forming sentences.

Some of the issues that the parents and students disagreed over during homework time were, the work not being copied down correctly, listening to the parents explanation, math answers, work being done sloppy, working too fast, needing to try harder, excessive erasing and how the assignment should be done.

The parents want the teachers to know that they are doing a good job, however, they would like for their children to get individual help when needed. Parents would also like to see more of the classwork that was done on a daily basis. 83% of the parents like very much that their child gets homework but, only 45% of the parents responded that

their child likes it some. 65% of parents would be interested in attending a workshop on homework and for those who responded no, some commented that their job would conflict with the scheduling. 82% of parents would like information sent to them on how to help their child with homework.

Questions that were only asked of students

Of the total number of students surveyed (N=60), 35% feel that noises and other activities going on in the home is distracting when doing homework. Only 25% feel that they can complete their homework without any help. 77% of the students responded that their parents always correct their homework before they bring it back to school. 60% of the students responded that they never call anyone if they or their parents do not understand the homework. 87% of the students responded that they think that by doing homework it will make them smarter. 62% of the students responded that they always make-up homework that they did not complete the first time.

The students felt that their biggest homework problems were, not understanding the assignment, other family members making alot of noise while doing homework, not using correct spelling, and not writing neatly. The most difficult assignments to complete are math and book reports. If students fail to complete an assignment they will do it the next day. Some of the consequences for not doing homework were, no television, getting yelled at, a punishment, and somtimes getting hit.

Discussion

In conclusion, the results of this survey indicated that homework is beneficial in facilitating learning. Although homework is not always welcomed, parents do want their

children to be assigned a sufficient amount and children do like it, too. The parent's and children's views on homework were quite similar, however, there was a big difference on having a set time, getting assistance studying and homework being related to what was learned in class. Perhaps, the students are not aware of the concept of time, therefore they are not sure if they do homework at a set time everyday. The students may not realize that when they are reviewing work with someone that this a form of studying, and they may not be clear on the definition of studying. When parents expressed that they would like to see more of the classwork, this could account for the reason why they feel that not all the homework is related to what the child learned in class. Children feel that homework will make them smarter which supports the research that, a child who does more homework can achieve a higher average (Goldstein, 1960).

Parents and students both expressed that math is the most difficult part of the assigned homework, which supports the research that, parents have the most difficulty helping their child when it comes to doing math homework(Featherstone, 1985). Overall, the survey revealed evidence that supports the research I reviewed about homework. Doing homework in the lower grades is an issue that sparks disagreement, however, the foundation for what lies ahead gets put into place and is all ready to be built upon. These second grade families that completed the surveys are open to homework and the commitment involved in getting it done. When a child is ready to begin their school career, a good foundation is necessary for a child's academic future.

Appendix

Parent Survey

Student Survey

Parent Survey: Your Child's Homework Habits

Please complete this survey and return to school by _____.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Does your child keep a well-organized notebook?			
2. Does your child fail to bring home the necessary materials (textbooks, workbooks, worksheets, etc.) for homework?			
3. Does your child copy down the assignments completely?			
4. Does your child gather all the necessary materials (scissors, crayons, glue, dictionary, etc.) needed to complete homework before they start?			
5. Do you enforce a set time for beginning homework?			
6. Does your child take an unusually long time to do the assigned homework?			
7. Does your child fail to complete homework?			
8. Does your child have difficulty concentrating on homework?			
9. Is the television on while your child is doing homework?			
10. Is your child easily distracted by noises or by other activities going on while doing homework?			
11. Is your child easily frustrated by the homework assignment?			
12. Does your child need someone present in the room in order to do homework satisfactorily?			
13. Does your child daydream or play with objects when doing homework?			
14. Does your child whine or complain about doing homework?			
15. Does your child hurry through the assignment and make careless mistakes?			

	Always	Sometimes	Never
16. Does your child respond poorly when asked to correct homework?			
17. Do you sign all your child's homework?			
18. Do you feel your child gets too much homework?			
19. Do you feel your child gets too little homework?			
20. Do you feel the assignments are related to their classwork?			
21. Does your child study for tests?			
22. Does your child get assistance when studying?			
23. Does your child use strategies when studying for test such as listing, reciting, writing, etc.?			

Please complete the following statements:

24. My child's biggest homework problem is_____

_____

25. At homework time my child and I always disagree over_____

_____

26. I wish my child's teacher knew that_____

_____

Questions:

27. How do you feel about homework?
Don't like it____ Dislike it some____ Like it some____ Like it very much_____

28. How does your child feel about homework?
Don"t like it____ Dislike it some____ Like it some_____ Like it very much_____

29. Would you like to attend a workshop on homework? **Yes**_____ **No**_____

30. Would you like information sent to you on how to help your child with homework?
Yes_____ **No**_____

Student Survey on Homework

	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Do you bring home all the necessary books and supplies needed to do homework?			
2. Do you like doing homework?			
3. Do you copy down all your assignments?			
4. Do you have a set time for doing homework?			
5. Does it take you a very long time to do your homework?			
6. Do you watch television while doing homework?			
7. Do you get distracted by noises or other activities going on in the house when you are doing your homework?			
8. Do you complete all your homework assignments?			
9. Does your homework relate to what you have learned in class?			
10. Do you have difficulty doing homework?			
11. Do your parents help you with your homework?			
12. Can you complete your homework without any help?			
13. Do you parents correct your homework before you bring it back to school?			
14. Do your parents sign your homework?			
15. Do you give your parents a hard time when it comes to checking or doing homework?			
16. Does your homework help you learn the work better that you were taught in school?			

	Always	Sometimes	Never
17. Do you call someone when you or your parents do not understand the homework?			
18. Does homework help you to learn good study habits?			
19. Do you study for a test?			
20. Does anyone help you study for a test?			
21. Does your teacher grade your homework?			
22. Do you feel your teacher gives you too much homework?			
23. Do you think that by doing homework you will be smarter?			
24. Do you receive a consequence if you do not do all of your homework?			
25. Do you make-up homework that you did not complete the first time?			

Please complete the following statements:

26. My biggest homework problem is that_____

_____

27. At homework time I always_____

_____

28. I wish my teacher knew that I_____

_____

Questions:

29. If you do not do homework what are the consequences that you receive from your parents?

_____

_____

30. What homework subject is the hardest for you to complete on your own, tell why?

_____

_____

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